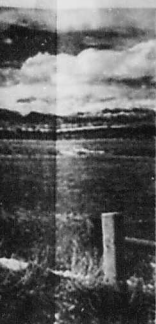


# communities across the nation



A large empty field in Cody, Wyo., above, is the site of a 10,000-square-foot Latter-day Saint temple, shown as an artist's rendering.

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Greenwood miles from the site of the proposed 10,000-square-foot temple in Dallas.

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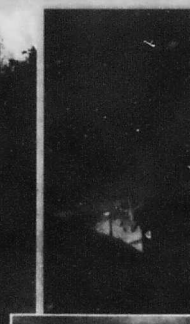
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## LACK OF COMPROMISE

Joel Schuh is among those Fairview residents balking at the construction of the temple as currently proposed.

The high school teacher and his wife, Jennifer, worked hard to buy a plot away from city lights. If the temple goes forward, the couple will share a fence with the structure.

"We moved out to a rural community," Schuh said, "100% to get away from something like this."

Again and again, Schuh took care to draw a distinction between local "rank-and-file" church members, who, he said, have been "nothing but courteous," and the institutional church and its top brass, with whom he said he has grown increasingly disillusioned.

"The thing that makes me so irritated is all they have to do to end this is to come out and say, 'We understand what the community wants, and we're going to build it within standards,'" he said. "And all of this goes away. That's what's so disturbing about all of this is... the unwillingness to compromise with anything."

Las Vegas' Matthew DeLoe echoed this sentiment, saying the whole experience had put a "bad taste" in locals' mouths "about this developer."

"There's this permanent stain," he said, "being put on their previously squeaky clean reputation."

## A TYPICAL DEVELOPER

The Salt Lake Tribune interviewed questions to a church spokesperson, among them the organization's approach and guiding principles when opposition to temple projects arises and how the faith advises members when asking

them to support these projects. Those answers were not provided.

Lisa Mayo-Defriso, a community activist who has been fighting large developments in rural Las Vegas for 30 years, pushed back against the idea that the church is doing anything outside the norm

when it comes to these sorts of planning and zoning fights, which she said often involve well-placed (yet legal) campaign donations and help from downtown law firms.

"They're very typical," she said, explaining the "playbook" followed by church officials is the same one she's seen used by her various opponents through the years — with one exception.

"They have people they can activate," she said, calling this "a plus and a minus" for the faith.

On the one hand, Latter-day Saint leaders have a built-in grassroots network they can count on to email their officials and show up at public hearings.

Less helpful, Defriso said, are "some of the things people are posting" online, some of which are "antagonistic."

"People," she said, "are passionate on both sides."

## WHAT TEMPLES REPRESENT TO BELIEVERS

For believers, there may be few things worth going to the mat for more than a temple.

Only inside their dedicated halls can the faithful perform the most sacred rituals necessary to return to live with God, including uniting couples in marriage for eternity.

"The temple is sacred to us," Todd Moody, a Latter-day Saint living about 8 miles from the proposed site of the Lone Mountain Temple, explained during public comment at the May 14 planning commission meeting. "It's a place where we believe heaven and earth come together."

Within this context, arguments about height and light can feel trivial at best and personal at worst, particularly when paired — as in the minds of some — with calls to leave

SHELBY TAUBER | Special to The Tribune

Joel and Jennifer Schuh, above, stand in their backyard that shares a fence with a lot where a proposed Latter-day Saint temple may be built in Fairview, Texas. A rendering of the building is shown at left.



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

TRENT NELSON | Tribune file photo

A large empty field, above, is the site of the announced Heber Valley Temple in Heber. A Latter-day Saint meetinghouse is shown in the foreground, and a rendering of the planned temple is shown at left.

wreckage of the temple war behind it. At least, that's what City Council member Erik Rowland has observed. The council voted it through in November, at which point the comments, he said, "fell off a cliff."

For "a couple of weeks," he said, he felt like a soldier emerging after a great battle, wondering, "Has the dust been fired? Can we stick our heads out?"

The answer, from as far as he can tell, is yes, thanks partly to new issues that have captured locals' attention.

The exception: neighbors who are now suing the county, as reported by KPCW. Early this month, the assigned judge agreed to hear the case, as well as to allow the church to join the list of defendants.

## I DON'T EVEN GO TO CHURCH ANYMORE

The community of Erda, located just outside of Tooele, has been less lucky, according to Latter-day Saint resident Kyle Mathews. The small-business owner was among those who successfully fought the building of a temple and an associated housing development the church tried to construct in the town of 3,000.

The church moved the site for the three-story, 70,000-square-foot Deseret Peak Temple down the road from the original location ("We don't go anywhere where we're not welcome," the faith's governing First Presidency said at the time), to Tooele City, but resentment remains.

"It's still talked about," Mathews said, explaining his mom came home "just the other day" from a church activity, where the other women, she told him, "were still complaining about not having a temple."

Friends and neighbors he and his family have known their whole lives, he said, avoid them in the grocery store or go inside their homes when they see them coming.

"I don't even go to church any more," he said. "I don't associate with those people I met."

## AFTER THE DUST SETTLES— BOSTON AND HEBER

Temple zoning fights are hardly new for the church. As far back as the turn of the century, the faith was locked in a bitter dispute with the people in the Boston suburb of Belmont, Massachusetts, over the height of the spire on the temple there. The back-and-forth lasted for years before the state's Supreme Court finally settled the matter in 2001 in the church's favor.

"Emotions were very high," said Grant Bennett, who was serving as the bishop, or lay leader, of a congregation in the area at the time, and as a kind of official liaison between the church and the community.

Nevertheless, the "win-or-lose" dynamic was "positive," he said, among them improved "mutual respect" between the church and the community.

Heber City, the opponent to be, remains the



The open field, shown at left, is the planned site of the Lone Mountain Temple northwest of Las Vegas, Nev., which can be seen in the background, along the horizon.

RACHEL ASTON